

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

2101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE, WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

DIVISION OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

7 March 1960

Brig. General Don D. Flickinger, USAF, MC
Air Research and Development Command
U. S. Air Force
Andrews Air Force Base
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear General Flickinger:

I have just returned from the meeting at Palo Alto where the Committee on Psychological and Biological Research of the Space Science Board held a one-day session in conjunction with the membership of Dr. Joshua Lederberg's WESTEX Committee. As you know, the latter group is especially interested in the detection of extra-terrestrial life.

Dr. Lederberg asked me to prevail upon your office for information and possible stimulation of research on the identification of extra-terrestrial life.

Dr. Lederberg showed us a colored picture taken by General Electric at 1,000 miles, which included the entire North American continent, including Panama and the upper borders of South America. Some very interesting color interpretations were suggested, especially the difference in the shades of ripening grain fields of the center of the continent, the shades of color indicating the lessened maturity of grains in the northern areas.

Specifically, Dr. Lederberg suggested the possibility that your office and those engaged in research in photography might collaborate in a program designed to study photo-interpretation of (a) organic chemical material, and (b) evidence of living material.

As you may know, Dr. Harry Wexler, Director of the U. S. Weather Bureau, obtained copies of the GE colored picture of North America and the Weather Bureau experts have added some isobars. I feel that Dr. Wexler's office and GE would willingly cooperate in furnishing copies of available prints.

Another item at the Space Science Board meeting was expression of a strong feeling that a study be conducted to determine the roles of manned versus nonmanned vehicles. This, of course, is the same recommendation as that of Gordon Vaeth on which your Panel 10 ini-

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tiated studies. At Palo Alto, I was able only to say that I thought you had handed this problem to a group at Charlottesville. Do let me know if this group is active. Dr. Lederberg is particularly anxious to see to it that something is done on this problem.

In view of the two problems posed above, may I suggest that you correspond with Dr. Joshua Lederberg, Department of Genetics, Stanford University. Carbon copies will be appreciated for our records.

Sincerely yours,

Sam F. Seeley, M. D.
Executive Secretary
Armed Forces-NRC Committee
on Bio-Astronautics

SFS/dck

cc: Dr. R. K. Cannan
Dr. Otto Schmitt
Dr. Joshua Lederberg *JLS*
Mr. George Derbyshire